

REMARKS

At the outset, the Examiner is thanked for the thorough review and consideration of the subject application. The Office Action of June 23, 2003 has been received and contents carefully reviewed.

By this Amendment, Applicants add new claims 42-48 and amend claims 1, 2, 17-19, 22, 27 and 29. In addition Applicants cancel claims 16, 26 and 28 without disclaiming the underlying subject matter. Accordingly, claims 1-13, 17-19, 22, 24-25, 27 and 29-48 are currently pending in the present application. Reexamination and reconsideration of the application are respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-5, 10-13, and 16-19 under 35 USC § 102 (a and e) as being clearly anticipated by Makita et al. (US Patent No. 5,851,860); and rejected claims 7-9, 14, 15, 22, and 24-41 under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Makita et al. (US Patent No. 5,851,860). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 is allowable over the cited references in that claim 1 recites a combination of elements including, for example, "annealing the amorphous silicon layer, wherein the annealing is carried out for less than about 50 minutes." None of the cited references, singly or in combination, teaches or suggests at least this feature of the claimed invention. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 and claims 7-13, 27 and 30, which depend therefrom, are allowable over the cited references.

Applicants respectfully submit that, while the annealing process of the present invention is carried out for less than 50 minutes for crystallization of an a-Si layer, the annealing process of Makita et al. is carried out for about four hours (see col. 9, line 13 and col. 19 line 36) or several tens of hours (see col. 14 line 17 and col. 17 line 15). Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that Makita et al. does not teach or suggest the claimed invention as a whole.

Claim 2 is allowable over the cited references in that claim 2 recites a combination of elements including, for example, "annealing the amorphous silicon layer, wherein the annealing is carried out for less than about 50 minutes." None of the cited references, singly or in combination, teaches or suggests at least this feature of the claimed invention. Accordingly,

Applicants respectfully submit that claim 2 and claims 3-6, 29 and 31-35, which depend therefrom, are allowable over the cited references.

Claim 22 is allowable over the cited references in that claim 22 recites a combination of elements including, for example, "a heater arranged at the substrate support, the heater supplying the substrate with heat for performing crystallization while the plasma generating device produces plasma inside the chamber, wherein the performing crystallization is carried out for less than about 50 minutes." None of the cited references, singly or in combination, teaches or suggests at least this feature of the claimed invention. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 22 and claims 24-25 and 41, which depend therefrom, are allowable over the cited references.

Applicants submit that the new independent claim 42, and claims 43-44, which depend from claim 42; new independent claims 45, 47 and 48; and new independent claim 46, and claims 17-19 and 36-40, which depend from claim 46 are allowable over the art of record.

Applicants believe the foregoing amendments place the application in condition for allowance and early, favorable action is respectfully solicited. If the Examiner deems that a telephone conference would further the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at the telephone number (202) 496 - 7500. All correspondence should continue to be sent to the below-listed address.

If these papers are not considered timely filed by the Patent and Trademark Office, then a petition is hereby made under 37 C.F.R. §1.136, and any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 for any necessary extension of time, or any other fees required to complete the

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Respectfully submitted,

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Date: September 23, 2003

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